



Western South Dakota Outdoor Report Wildlife Division Region 1 December 14, 2012



Fire Danger is high everywhere. Please refrain from target practice in grassy areas where a spark can start a fire. Don't drive or park vehicles or ATVs in grassy areas. Carry a fire extinguisher, water, and know where cell coverage is. Don't throw cigarettes out.

Bennett, S. Jackson, E. Shannon

Reporting Officer: WCO Tom Beck 12/12/2012

Fishing Activity: Angling has been very slow in the area. There are very few angling opportunities in the district.

Hunting Report: Waterfowl – The weather moved out a lot of waterfowl. The ducks are pretty well gone and there are a lot less geese here now. Perhaps the geese will come back with the upcoming warm weather, but at this point it is going to be hit or miss.



Small Game – Upland game hunting is pretty slow with hunters reporting hunting all day for one shot. There are still some birds, but they are very spooky.



Big Game- There are some elk here now, but the unfilled elk hunters are nowhere to be seen. Now is the time to be here hunting if you have a tag for this season. There are a few archery and muzzleloader hunters around, but most of the deer hunting has ended. There are still turkeys so if you are looking for turkeys, this is the place to be.

Land Report: Everyone has different ideas about what walk in areas should look like. Pheasant hunters want CRP or perhaps standing crops. Big game hunters and waterfowl hunters need cropland or even alfalfa fields to attract their prey although they will not complain about woody cover also. An area that may be a disappointment for upland game hunting may be the best of areas for other species. While walk in areas are often signed up with multiple species in mind, some walk in areas may be better suited for big game or waterfowl while others fit the bill for upland game. We received a complaint recently from a hunter complaining about the usefulness of a winter wheat field. While that field has deer and goose hunting on it, it is part of a bigger contract with many additional opportunities. In fact, one of the fields in that contract is adjacent to LaCreek National Wildlife refuge and is also a winter

wheat field. It had multiple hunters each day during the deer season and many nice deer were harvested there. In addition, several groups of goose hunters have hunted there with good success also. And, as the seasons progress and new crops are planted next year, it and the other fields on that contract will also provide upland game hunting. So, when looking at an area, please remember there are different opportunities for different hunters and what looks good to one may not to another hunter. If you have questions on an area, please don't be afraid to ask to gain a background on why an area is in the program.

District Report: **Two elk were shot and left recently on the Bennett/Todd County line.**

Another was possibly wounded and left to wonder off to die. If you saw anything or have information on the shooting, you can call Conservation Officer Tom Beck at 685-6335. I would appreciate any help you can give me.

A cow was shot in northern Bennett County recently also. It was shot twice in the stomach/intestines and left to suffer and die. It looks like an intentional shooting. A horse was shot a couple of miles from that site a few months ago. Again, that shooting appeared to be intentional. Anyone with any information on either shooting can contact me at the above number. Your information will be kept confidential and any information to help apprehend the shooters would be greatly appreciated.

Butte, Harding County

WCO Bill Eastman - report 12-12-12

Fishing Activity: Ice has finally covered Orman but it is likely thin and unsafe on the majority of the reservoir.

Hunting Report:

Waterfowl – The waterfowl season has been good in southern Butte County. There have been good numbers of geese and ducks on Orman and on the Belle Fourche River.



Small Game – Sharptail Grouse numbers are good for Butte County. Pheasant hunting opportunities for Butte County is limited to the Belle Fourche irrigation district which consists of private lands. Access is limited and bird numbers are low.

Big Game- Whitetail deer numbers are down as a result of EHD in various portions of Butte County but the overall whitetail deer population is good. Hunters have been finding plenty of deer along the Belle Fourche irrigation district. Private land access for antlerless deer hunters (youth, muzzleloader and archery) would likely be good if you knock on some doors.

Land Report: The fire danger is low. Be respectful of both public and private lands when you hunt.

Custer (South) see Pennington (West) for N. Custer

WCO Jacob Ehlert 12-12-12



Small Game – Pheasants can be seen on fields on private land along the Cheyenne River. Birds are skittish this late in the year.

Big Game – Muzzleloaders and archery deer hunters with doe tags have had good success in the eastern part of the county. Remember doe tags are NOT valid inside the Black Hills Fire Protection district. Most antlerless elk hunters have found elk on private ranches in southern Custer County.

Turkey hunters have had excellent success this fall. Many landowners in the hills and on the prairie are reporting turkey damage and are looking for hunters to harvest turkeys.

Marlin Maude is looking for ~20 hunters to come and harvest some hen turkeys off of his ranch. If you have an unfilled west river fall turkey tag and are looking for a place to hunt please call Marlin at 391-0933 in the mornings or evenings for permission and for directions to his ranch.

Furbearers – Bobcat season opened on December 8. Trappers have had good success tracking cats in snow. As we get more snow success should improve.

Land Report: Please stay on designated roads and trails. Stop by the Custer U.S. Forest Service Office during the week to get a travel management map. Many travel management restrictions go into effect this month.

District Report: If you witness a violation, please call 1-888-OVERBAG.

Fall River

WCO D.J. Schroeder - report 12-5-12

Fishing Activity: A lot of fishermen have switched over to hunting the past few weeks.



Anglers have been catching a little of everything but most seem to be going after the crappies at Angostura. Had a few reports of trout at Coldbrook Reservoir.

Hunting Report: Waterfowl – Local mallard population seemed to increase for a few days when we had the snow and cold – then went back to about average. “Jump shooting” off the prairie ponds is limited this year due to the drought. Most of the ducks are concentrated on the river or Angostura. Resident Canada goose numbers are bouncing around past few weeks. Some success around Angostura and in the Oral area. May pickup when the winter weather gets to us.

Small Game – Pheasant season saw a lot of hunters using the few public areas in Fall River County. There were some birds harvested – but appeared to be limited. Those hunting on

private land had a few areas of success – but was spotty. It still appears bird numbers are down and most likely the result of the extended drought this year. Hunters were able to put a few grouse in the bag also. Didn't see much for birds while on patrol during the deer season.



Big Game – More reports of EHD dead Whitetail deer were reported in areas of the county last couple of weeks from deer hunters. Most reports came from the Oral, Hill GPA, and Oelrichs area. There were reports of dead deer all over the county though. Deer season went well. The weather was very favorable for most of the season. Saw a lot of nice deer harvested.

Opening of the cow elk season showed mixed success. Those hunting on private land had some success. The elk are again in a few large herds. Locating these herds can be difficult and the real success factor seems to be access issues. Seeing good numbers of elk in the herds and quite a few calves this year. A few muzzleloaders and archers still in the field. The rut seems to have died down – but still seeing a lot of bucks checkin on the does.

Land Report: The Hill GPA is getting a lot of hunting pressure. A few pheasants being harvested and frequent visitors trying out the waterfowl opportunity. Deer numbers appeared to be down this year in that area.

District Report: Hunters should remember that antlerless deer harvest is not allowed in the Black Hills Fire Protection District for many license types. That would include the north portion of Fall River County - - (Units 27L and 27A). Also, a quick reminder for those deer hunters with West River deer tags who plan on hunting the antlerless extension season from Dec. 29th thru Jan. 6th. Only unfilled antlerless tags are valid, the any deer tag is not valid for the extension season this year.

Hunters should also pay close attention to the off-road restrictions while hunting on the FS National Grasslands and the Black Hills Forest lands.

This is the time of year when many folks begin spending time in the field – whether pheasant, waterfowl, or big game hunting. Unfortunately, many people don't follow the laws and game violations occur as a result. Please take the time to record a license number and vehicle description when you witness a game violation. Don't hesitate to call the TIP's Hotline and report the violators. You will help us all preserve the sport!!

Haakon: (See E. Pennington)/ N. Jackson (See. Bennett)

WCO vacant; Josh Brainard and Tom Beck temporary until filled:

Josh Brainard report 12-12-12

Fishing Activity Ice is just starting to form on area ponds. With the mild daytime temperatures it would be unsafe to venture out on it.

Hunting Report: Waterfowl – no report

Small Game – Still seeing a lot of grouse around. They have bunched up for the winter, but should be able to find a covey in some of the brush covered draws.

Big Game – Muzzle loader and Archery deer seasons are still on. The deer are starting to trickle back into some of the public areas that got hunted during the rifle season.

Land Report: South trail around Curlew Lake has been closed to vehicle traffic. Foot traffic is allowed to access the South West portion of the Game Production Area for hunting and fishing. Signs are posted as such.

District Report: Nothing new to report

Harding

WCO: Mutschler and Eastman temporary until filled No report

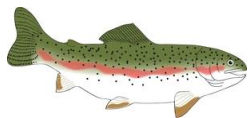
Jackson

Northern WCO: Josh Brainard See Pennington East

Southern WCO: Tom Beck See Bennet Co.

Lawrence (Northern) see Pennington (Western) for S. Lawrence

Reporting Officer: WCO Mike Apland 12-13-12



Fishing Activity: Fishing has slowed on most Hills lakes, stocking has continued on Mirror and Coxes, and trout are being caught on both lakes.

Ice is forming on most area lakes; it is still unsafe to even walk on most of the lakes at this time.

Hunting Report:

Waterfowl – The waterfowl season is open for the High Plains Unit which includes Lawrence County. A few local ducks are around but very little hunting activity. A few Mallards have starting showing up on the Belle Fourche River and Crow Creek areas. Remember shooting hours for waterfowl ends at sunset, with the snow on the ground it still can be light after the legal shooting hours have ended.

Small Game – Small game hunting is ongoing, with some hunters finding grouse, very limited pheasant hunting opportunities in Lawrence County



Big Game – Archery Deer, muzzleloader and youth deer are still open. Antlerless Elk season has opened back up, most of the elk in unit 1 are being found up high, near rifle pit/trailhead areas.

Just a quick reminder for those deer hunters with West River deer tags who plan on hunting the antlerless extension season from Dec. 29th thru Jan. 6th.

Only unfilled antlerless tags are valid, the any deer tag is not valid for the extension season this year.

Land Report: Both the Hills and the Prairie fire conditions are improving, but sportsmen need to stay aware of where they park and where they drive. Be respectful of both public and private lands when you hunt.

District Report: **A large headless buck was found this week in the city park of Spearfish near Indian Springs. Any information regarding this animal would be appreciated.** If you know anything about this large deer please contact a local Wildlife Officer or any dispatch center.

Meade

WCO Scot Hawks - report **11-15-12**



Fishing Activity: Fishing activity in the area is all but shut down for the fall. Some fish can still be caught, but it sounds like colder weather is coming soon.

Waterfowl: The migration into the area seems to be getting better. There are some local ducks and geese are still in the area also.

Small Game: All bird hunting seasons are open. Grouse numbers in the Sturgis area seem to be down a bit, but some hunters are finding birds to hunt in the central part of the county. Hunters reported seeing quite a few grouse while hunting deer this weekend.

The Faith area is showing some good success for pheasant and grouse hunting. Hunters are traveling a short distance from Faith and finding birds to harvest.



Big Game: ****There are some big changes for the archery hunters in the area.** The school district has closed the school ground near Sturgis high school to all hunting. Marcotte GPA has also had some changes. There is a new fence installed on the east side for the new property boundary. The city will not take full control of their new property for a couple of years, so hunting will still be allowed on the east side of the new fence.

Black Hills rifle deer and the west river prairie seasons are open and in full swing. Some nice bucks were seen traveling on vehicles throughout the county.

Land Report: If hunters are planning on hunting public lands they need to make sure they are accessing them legally. I have had lots of phone calls the last couple of weeks asking about accessing land locked pieces of public lands. It is legal to hunt those areas as long as the hunter is not trespassing to access the land. It is legal to use section lines for access, but hunting is not allowed on the section line.

Hunters are asked to gain permission or use section lines appropriately if accessing landlocked public lands.

District Report: Hunters are reminded there is the possibility for reward money when turning in poachers or other wildlife violations; please call the TIPS hotline at 1-888-OVERBAG (1-888-683-7224). Callers can remain anonymous.

Eastern Pennington

WCO Josh Brainard- report 12-3-12

Fishing Activity: Ice is just starting to form on area ponds. With the mild daytime temperatures it would be unsafe to venture out on it.

Hunting Report: Waterfowl – A few ducks and geese observed through area. Low to no water available in lot of the area.

Small Game – Still seeing a lot of grouse around. They have bunched up for the winter, but should be able to find a covey in some of the brush covered draws.

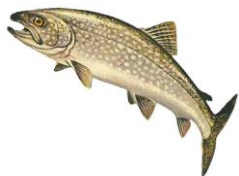
Big Game –Muzzle loader and Archery deer seasons are still on. The deer are starting to trickle back into some of the public areas that got hunted during the rifle season.

Land Report: South trail around Curlew Lake has been closed to vehicle traffic. Foot traffic is allowed to access the South West portion of the Game Production Area for hunting and fishing. Signs are posted as such.

Pennington (Central)

WCO Joe Keeton, Jeff Edwards, Adam Geigle

Jeff Edwards report 12-6-12



Fishing Activity: No ice cover on Sheridan or Pactola lake.

Hunting Report:

Waterfowl – Focusing east and northeast, there is some waterfowl hunting opportunities surrounding the Rapid City area.

Small Game – Good pockets of sharptail grouse east of I-90 and highway 79.

Big Game – Dispose of deer carcasses at the landfill, or use your own garbage service. Dumping your deboned deer carcass in the road right-of-way, or in the Black Hills National Forest is illegal and sours our hunting image.

Reporting Officer: Joe Keeton 12-5-12

Fishing Activity: No Report

Hunting Report:

Waterfowl – A few ducks and geese observed through area.

Small Game – Still seeing a lot of grouse around.

Big Game –Muzzle loader and Archery deer seasons are still on.

WCO Adam Geigle- report 12-12-12

Fishing Activity: Very little activity.

Hunting Report:

Waterfowl Low numbers, little hunting pressure



Small Game – Still plenty of grouse around east of Rapid City. Lots of land to cover, plan to walk a lot. Not many people out lately.

Big Game - Rut is pretty much over. Hunters reminded it is illegal to dump carcasses on forest service ground or in road ditches.

Land Report: Hunters continue to have hunts ruined by people driving off trail.

Pennington (Western)/ N.Custer/SW Lawrence

WCO Blair Waite Report -No Report

Perkins

WCO Officer: Keith Mutschler: Report 12-4-12

Fishing Activity: I have been getting some reports that there were a few ice fishermen out last weekend on some of the smaller dams. Reports are the Ice was 3-4 inches thick. With the warmer temps the ice has began to deteriorate again and **it is not advised to walk on the ice.** Shadehill began to open up again and some boats were out this last weekend. There have not been enough fishermen out to get a good report.

Hunting Report:

Waterfowl –The geese and ducks are starting to show up. Hunters hunting Canada geese are reporting some success. Hunter that are having the best luck are coming out a day in advance and scouting.

Small Game –The pheasant hunter are becoming less as the season goes on. This is allowing the birds on public land to filter back in and they are also starting to settle down.

Big Game – West river deer season went well. There are still plenty of deer in Perkins County for anyone looking to harvest a deer with an archery or muzzle loader tag.

The late antlerless season starts later this month. The antlerless tags are only tags that are valid during this season. Any deer, special buck, any whitetail deer etc are not valid during the antlerless season.

District Report: I am starting to receive calls about spotlighting in Perkins and Ziebach County. While some of this is legal spotlighting a good majority of it is not being done legally. If you have any questions after reading the hunting handbook regarding artificial light it is advised to call your local conservation officer.

I have also taken some calls about theft of traps and animals caught in traps. Hunters need to be reminded that theft of traps, tampering with someone's trap or the animal in it is a class one misdemeanor and is a mandatory court appearance. Any one observing someone stealing or tampering with someone's trap can call the tips hotline 1-888-683-7224 or your local conservation officer to report this activity.

Shannon

WCO D.J. Schroeder west (see Fall River); Tom Beck east (see Bennette)

Ziebach

WCO: Keith Mutschler temporary until filled –see Perkins report

No report